



**Governor's Quick Links**

[eNewsletters](#)  
[Press Releases](#)  
[Photo Gallery](#)  
[Audio & Video Gallery](#)

**Latest News**

**May 8**

[Gov. Ritter Appoints New Judges in the 4<sup>th</sup> Judicial District...](#)

**May 8**

[Gov. Ritter Applauds Vestas Wind Tower Decision...](#)

**May 8**

[Gov. Ritter Issues Flag-Lowering Orders...](#)

**Learn More**

[P-20 Education Council](#)  
['08 Legislative Decisions](#)  
[GEM Review](#)  
[CAP4K](#)



**Printer Friendly**

[Download Acrobat Reader](#)

**2008 Legislative Wrap-Up**

This week, the legislature wrapped up its 2008 session, and I'm pleased to say we made incredible progress in many high-priority areas, such as education, business development and health care.

Back in January, in my second State of the State address, I laid out ambitious goals for this legislative session. We battled 1,000 on all of them. The people of this state -- the children of this state -- will benefit for years to come because of the strategic investments of the past few months.

[Click here to read more >>>](#)

**Coming Up ★★★★★**

**10:30 a.m. Monday, May 12:**

Gov. Ritter will help dedicate Frontier Airlines' newest Airbus 320 as a special Colorado plane. Location: Denver International Airport.

**8 to 9 p.m. Monday, May 12:**

Gov. Ritter will appear on "The Aaron Harber Show," a live public-affairs call-in show on KBDI Cable Channel 12 in Denver.

**7:30 a.m. Tuesday, May 13:**

Gov. Ritter will be in Colorado Springs to sign Senate Bill 1 into law, which establishes a new statewide School Safety Resource Center. Location: 1750 Thunder Mountain Ave.

**7:30 p.m. Saturday, May 17:**

Gov. Ritter will deliver the commencement speech at his alma mater, Colorado State University's College of Liberal Arts. Location: CSU, Moby Arena, Fort Collins.

**Latest Photos ★★★★★**



00:15

Gov. Ritter will be sending a regular eNewsletter to stay in touch with the people of Colorado. If this was forwarded to you from a friend, please click [Subscribe](#) below to sign up for future eNewsletters from our office. If you would like to stop receiving these please click the [unsubscribe](#) button below.

[Subscribe](#) [Unsubscribe](#)

BILL RITTER  
Colorado's Governor[Home](#) [About the Governor](#) [Cabinet](#) [Press Office](#) [Offices of the Governor](#) [Contact the Governor](#)[Home](#) > [Press Office](#) > [eNewsletters](#) > > > "2008 Legislative Wrap-Up" More >[Biography](#)[Press Releases](#)[eNewsletters](#)[Executive Orders](#)[Photo Gallery](#)[Speeches](#)[Audio and Video Gallery](#)[Current Flag Status](#)

## Citizen Assistance

[visit the website](#)

## Share Your Opinion

[visit the website](#)

## eNewsletter

[Sign up here](#)

Lt. Governor

Barbara O'Brien

[VISIT HER WEBSITE](#)

First Lady of Colorado

Jeannie Ritter

[VISIT HER WEBSITE](#)

## QUICK LINKS

- [Contact the Governor](#)
- [Press Releases](#)
- [Proclamation/Letter Request](#)
- [Scheduling Request](#)



## "2008 Legislative Wrap-Up" More

[<<< Back to "Legislative Wrap-Up" main page](#)

FRIDAY, MAY 9, 2008

This week, the legislature wrapped up its 2008 session, and I'm pleased to say we made incredible progress in many high-priority areas, such as education, business development and health care.

Back in January, in my second State of the State address, I laid out ambitious goals for this legislative session. We battled 1,000 on all of them. The people of this state -- the children of this state -- will benefit for years to come because of the strategic investments of the past few months.

We made aggressive gains in business development and education reform, and we showed steady progress on marathon issues such as health care, higher-ed funding and the New Energy Economy.

I'm particularly proud of the Colorado Achievement Plan for Kids (Senate Bill 212), a multi-year effort that will completely change K-12 education content and testing standards. The goal is simple: to better prepare our children for today's competitive global marketplace by giving them the 21st century skills and knowledge they need to succeed in college or a career.

This was a bipartisan effort. We did our best work this session when we worked together, built coalitions, sought common ground and achieved consensus.

This session was defined by responsible, affordable and prudent investments in the people and institutions of this state. We implemented sound policy, not sound bites. We governed well and we accomplished much, but we still have much to do. I look forward to continuing these efforts in the weeks, months and years ahead.

## Here are just some of the highlights from the session:

## Business Development

The legislature adopted the most robust economic-development package in 20 years. It exempts 30,000 more businesses from the Business Personal Property Tax, invests \$26.5 million in bioscience projects, and makes it easier for small business to qualify for job-creation incentives. The package also enacts the most significant corporate income tax change in 40 years, providing an incentive to companies that want to build their workforces and facilities in Colorado and rewarding those already investing in the people and infrastructure of the state.

HB 1001 (Riesberg/Bacon), Colorado Bioscience Research Grant Program  
HB 1183 (Hodge/Veiga), New Job Creation Incentives  
HB 1225 (Rice/Williams), Business Personal Prop. Tax  
HB 1261 (Buescher/Bacon), Fly-Away Sales Tax Exemption  
HB 1380 (Jahn/Shaffer), Single-Sales Factor

## K-12 Education

Colorado Achievement Plan for Kids (SB 212, Penry & Romer/Scanlan & Witwer) -- Completely reforms the state's K-12 content and system of assessment standards so that students have the skills and knowledge necessary to compete and succeed in college or careers.

School Finance Act (HB 1388, Pommer/Windels) -- Wipes out the waiting list for the Colorado Pre-School Program; expands full-day kindergarten for 22,000 children over five years and includes capital funding for full-day kindergarten classrooms; and creates a teacher alternative compensation grant program.

Colorado Counselor Corps (HB 1370, Middleton/Bacon) -- Creates Colorado Counselor Corps that will deploy 70 new counselors into targeted middle and high school.  
Building Excellent Schools Today (HB 1335, Romanoff/Groff) -- Directs hundreds of millions of dollars into repairing old and building new schools statewide.

Innovative School Act of 2008 (SB 130, Groff/Witwer) -- Allows schools in struggling areas to break free from rules and regulations that may be interfering with their ability to innovate and succeed.

## Higher Education Funding

Higher Ed Operating & Capital Investments (HB 1375, Buescher/Keller) -- Invests \$65.8 million into the operating budgets of Colorado colleges and universities, representing a 9 percent increase from the prior year and the largest dollar investment in Colorado history. Capital

investment amounts to \$118.5 million.

Higher Ed Capital Construction (SB 218, Schwartz & Penry/Buescher & Balmer) -- Reallocates Federal Mineral Lease dollars for higher-ed construction projects and for the first time creates higher-ed savings or rainy day accounts.

FML Certificates of Participation (SB 233, Windels & Williams/Riesberg & Marostica) -- Allows the state to issue Certificates of Participation for about \$200 million of construction projects at colleges and universities statewide.

#### **Building Blocks to Health Care Reform**

The "Building Blocks to Health Care Reform" package provides one of the most significant investments in children's health in years, while also addressing fundamental system issues around cost, quality and transparency.

Expand Access and Improve Health Care for Kids (SB 160, Hagedorn/McGihon) -- Extends health insurance to thousands more Colorado kids by expanding eligibility in the Colorado Health Plan Plus to 225 percent of federal poverty level.

Building Blocks -- Other measures provide a Medical Home to every child in CHP+ and Medicaid, make it easier for families to enroll in CHP+ and Medicaid, increase outreach/enrollment efforts, and increase reimbursement rates for primary care providers.

Expand Support for the Colorado Responds to Children with Special Needs Program -- (HB 1100, Gagliardi/Keller)

Reduce Fraud and Abuse in Medicaid (HB 1409, Pommer/Johnson)

#### **Improve Quality & Efficiency in Health Care**

- ◆ Standardize Health Plan ID Cards (SB 135, Mitchell/Gagliardi)
- ◆ Increase and improve transparency in health insurance (HB 1385, Primavera/Schwartz)
- ◆ Invest in health information technology through support of the Colorado Regional Health Information Organization (CORHIO) (Building Blocks Budget Package)

#### **Protect Health Care Consumers**

- ◆ Empower the Division of Insurance to seek restitution for consumers who are wronged by insurance companies (HB 1228, Green/Gordon)
- ◆ Protect consumers who need long term care services by licensing home care agencies (SB 153, Boyd/Ferrandino)

#### **Strengthen Public Health Programs**

- ◆ Reorganize public health in Colorado (SB 194, Hagedorn/McGihon)
- ◆ Increase funding for immunizations (Budget)
- ◆ Improve access to oral health services for Old Age Pension participants (HB 1116, Gallegos/Shaffer)
- ◆ Update the public health statutes on Tuberculosis (HB1199, Ferrandino/Williams)

#### **Strengthen Nursing and Patient Safety**

- ◆ Implement a pilot program to involve direct-care nurses in decision-making processes in hospitals (SB 188, Boyd / Pommer)
- ◆ Add nursing-sensitive quality measures to the Colorado Hospital Report Card (SB 196, Boyd and Tochtrop / Pommer)
- ◆ Strengthen the authority of Advanced Practice Nurses (HB 1060, Gagliardi / Hagedorn; HB 1061, Roberts / Hagedorn; and HB 1094, Gagliardi / Hagedorn)

#### **New Energy Economy**

After doubling the state's renewable energy standard in 2007, we embarked on Phase II of the New Energy Economy this year: Bringing the New Energy Economy Home.

Homegrown Energy/Net Metering -- (HB 1160, Solano/Shaffer & Isgar)

Utility Scale Solar Energy -- (HB 1164, Solano/Schwartz)

Go Green -- (HB 1350, Madden/Romer)

Low Income Energy Assistance -- (HB 1387, Buescher/Veiga)

Homeowner Association Energy Efficiency Measures -- (HB 1270)

Increase Energy Efficiency in State Buildings -- (SB 147, Gordon/Hodge)

Colorado Clean Energy Finance Program -- (SB 184, Romer/Lewy)

Sincerely,

Bill Ritter, Jr.  
Governor